



State Representative  
**Gigi Talcott**

## News & Views:

# 2000 Session Review

Representing Fircrest, University Place, Lakewood, Steilacoom,  
Tillicum, W. Tacoma, and Anderson, Ketron & McNeil Islands

Dear Friends & Neighbors,

May 2000

What highs, what lows, what twists and turns. The 2000 session of our state Legislature was a wild ride. With 49 Republicans and 49 Democrats sharing control, it was like two people trying to drive a car with two steering wheels and two separate brakes. Each driver could bring the car to a complete stop, yet neither driver could move the car forward without the other.

This was especially true with the budget. After many challenging, complicated negotiations in the House, **we worked it out!** It's certainly not my favorite budget, but I believe our work this year is a responsible answer to the voter-supported Initiative 695.

The bipartisan House budget requires state **government do some beginning belt tightening**, so we could **rescue our local police and firefighter programs, boost funding for schools** and **give tax breaks to senior citizens**. It also gets some major transportation projects moving so we aren't forced to spend so much time stuck in traffic. We finally passed laws to increase health care coverage and honor our veterans. We also passed a law that will permanently continue the \$30 license tab fees instead of sitting back waiting for a court to reinstate the MVET (Motor Vehicle Excise Tax).

Inside you'll find more information about these issues, a sampling of the 277 other issues we debated this year, a couple of interesting graphs and an invitation to come to a "town hall" to discuss these issues together. **Hearing from you always helps.** As I drive down I-5, I often think about the messages people leave for me at **home (253-564-9779)**, at the **office (360-786-7890)** or on the toll-free "hotline" **(1-800-562-6000)**. Some people write their questions, concerns or advice on a postcard or letter. I love working to find common-sense solutions to their problems, and I'm honored to serve as your state representative.

I hope that one of these days you'll give me a call or come to a "town hall" meeting to tell me what you're thinking. I value your advice!

Warmest regards,

Gigi Talcott  
Your State Representative

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Education — Co-Chair  
Financial Institutions & Insurance

### **Toll-Free Hotline:**

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### **Home Phone:**

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# Representative Gigi Talcott

## 2000 BUDGET UPDATE SUPPLEMENTAL BUDGET

The first budget I supported, the House Republican budget, included more than \$35 million for schools, ongoing funding for roads and highways, and a **significant, across-the-board property tax cut** that eliminated state property taxes for low-income seniors.

As this newsletter was going to print, in accordance with deadlines set by law, a final budget deal had not been worked out with the Senate. However, because **Democrats and Republicans were able to work together** so well in the House, I'm confident that we'll reach an agreement with the Senate that meets our state's needs.

## TRANSPORTATION

The House budget makes a meaningful ongoing commitment to improving our state's transportation system. To get the funds, we dedicated the **sales tax from the sale of new or used cars to pay for transportation projects**. These projects would make our roads and highways safer, and greatly reduce the time we spend stuck in traffic each day. Hopefully, that's the kind of **common-sense problem solving** you and your neighbors were seeking when voters passed I-695.

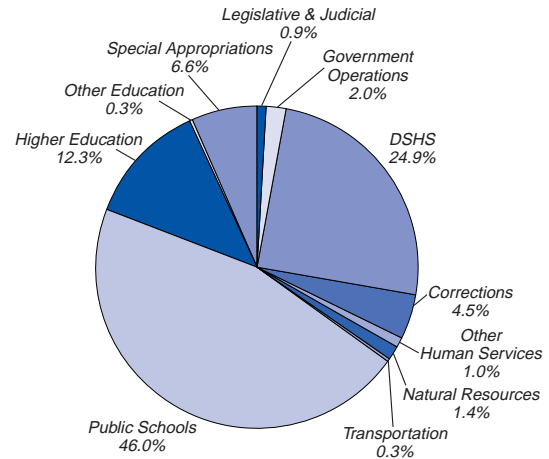
## PROTECTING OUR SENIORS

As I visit friends in care centers, I've learned that health care workers often become their family. While there are many devoted employees who lovingly care for their patients, unfortunately that's not always the case. We absolutely must **prevent the abuse of elderly and disabled people**.



## 1999-2001 General Fund Expenditures

*(Does not reflect current budgetary changes the Legislature is still considering)*



This year we approved national criminal background checks, tougher training standards, and made "criminal mistreatment," where workers neglect the people entrusted to their care, a crime. It's tragic that we need such a law, but I was convinced the problem is real.

## VETERANS AFFAIRS NEW COMMITTEE FORMED

After my husband retired from McChord AFB, I no longer heard the daily concerns of our active duty military personnel, veterans and their families. While most of those concerns are debated and decided in Washington, D.C., other veteran's issues, including military benefits and disaster preparedness, need attention. I am pleased to serve on our newly-established **Joint Select Committee on Veterans and Military Affairs**.

## HONORING OUR VETERANS

On President's Day, we celebrated the 80<sup>th</sup> birthday of my father-in-law. He, like thousands of our friends and neighbors, fought for our freedom in WWII. This year we're going to document the personal stories of our WWII vets so future generations will never forget the sacrifices they made. As Ronald Reagan said at Normandy, **"We will always remember. We will always be proud...so we may always be free."**

*Gigi at work on improving public schools, with seatmate Rep. Mike Carrell.*

## HEALTH CARE

We've worked together this session to pass several important measures, including a **"patients' bill of rights"** and much needed changes to increase **individual health care coverage**.

### The problem:

The current set of health insurance rules have made an imbalance in access, cost and benefits. Individuals and families can no longer buy health insurance in 32 of the 39 counties in Washington.

### The solution:

We re-established the principles of insurance so providers can once again bring benefits and reasonable access to **affordable health care throughout our state**.



## PROTECTING LAKE STEILACOOM

One continuing frustration for me is how we can convince or coerce the Department of Ecology to permit safe treatment of Lake Steilacoom and similar lakes throughout the state. You've heard me say it before — **it should be science, not politics** that decides the issue. I'm sick of seeing a jewel of a lake turn into a toxic swamp.

I have a commitment from the co-chair of the Agriculture and Ecology Committee that he'll personally visit Lakewood this summer to see for himself what Lake Steilacoom visitors face every year. The Legislature's policy-making powers have been hijacked by state agencies. We simply must take back local control.

## TEEN DRIVERS

**FACT: Deaths in cars with teenage drivers are more than double the fatalities of all other drivers combined.** FACT: 85% of the sixteen year-olds who were driving when someone was killed had never before received a traffic citation.

While I'm constantly **fighting government intrusion into our personal lives**, after thorough study of statistics like these, I decided to support new requirements for teen drivers. My husband, a Boeing pilot, reminded me that

everyone accepts graduated licences for pilots. Pilots pass rigorous written and flight tests and then must gain experience in the cockpit flying alone and at night before they're permitted to carry passengers. New driver's licences for teens would be much the same.

For the first six months a 16- or 17-year-old begins driving, SB 6264 will:

- Prohibit them from driving between 1 a.m. and -5 a.m.
- Forbid them from having other teenagers as passengers, except siblings

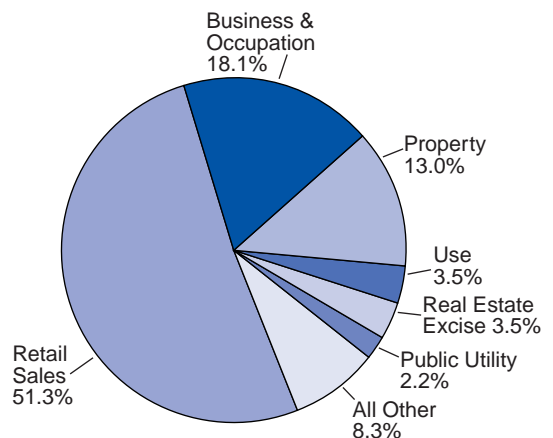
The restrictions are relaxed after six months, and are removed after one year of safe driving. The law will go into effect July 1, 2001.

## EDUCATION

### TEACHER TESTING

Parents are a student's first and best teachers, but classroom teachers are an important key to student success. Every parent deserves to know that the very best educators are teaching their children. We passed — and the governor signed — a bill requiring prospective teachers to **demonstrate competence in the subject(s) they plan to teach**. It's common sense, yet it took three years to make it law.

Where state tax dollars come from – 1999 to 2001



Retail Sales	10,405.4
Business & Occupation	3,673.2
Property	2,638.0
Use	707.8
Real Estate Excise	714.3
Public Utility	444.6
All Other	1,689.4
<b>Total*</b>	<b>20,272.7</b>

\*Reflects the March 1999 Revenue Forecast

## LOTTERY

One question that's always asked at "town halls" is, "**Why don't lottery dollars go to education?**" As co-chair of the House Education Committee, I finally got enough support in the House to dedicate lottery dollars to help local school districts improve their schools. Under legislation approved by the House, these funds could be used to give special classes before school, after school, on Saturday or during the summer. They could also be used to reduce class size, train staff, buy new books and computers, or fund needed classroom enhancements.

Most importantly, your locally-elected school board members would be the ones to decide how best to spend the money to improve education for their students in Fircrest, Lakewood, Steilacoom, Tacoma, and University Place.

But the Senate needs to pass this bill before it becomes law.

## PUBLIC SAFETY

I believe the most important function of government is to **protect the safety and well-being of its citizens**. Our House budget provides ongoing money to local communities to restore funding for local police and fire protection eliminated with the passage of Initiative 695.

Cities and counties will be able to count on this support year-in and year-out. In the plan which passed the House, Lakewood would get \$4,001,480; University Place \$2,739,223; Fircrest \$502,985; Steilacoom \$348,406; and Tacoma \$2,420,891. Our new budget put public safety funding first.

## TOWN HALL!

*Please join Rep. Mike Carrell and me  
at a Town Hall meeting . . .*

**Saturday, May 13th**  
Clover Park Technical College, Bldg. #31  
10 a.m. to 11 a.m.

*-or-*

**Tuesday, May 16th**  
UNIVERSITY PLACE LIBRARY  
7 p.m. to 8 p.m.

Because of state laws, I am required to send this newsletter to the printers before we've written the final budget in this long "special session." I hope you can come to a Town Hall meeting, or that you'll invite me to meet with you to answer your questions about the final chapter of "Legislature 2000."